CLAIMS

1. A method for installing a cushion and an inflator/horn assembly to a cover having a cavity therein for the cushion, said method comprising the steps of:

attaching the cushion to a mock inflator;

securing the cover;

compacting the cushion into the cover and around said mock inflator, such that the cushion is received into a cover cavity defined by the cover; and

removing the mock inflator from said cushion, thereby forming a sleeve cavity within the cushion for an inflator/horn assembly.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said compacting is further defined by the sleeve cavity being between the inflator/horn assembly and the cover such that a predetermined thickness of cushion is disposed between the sleeve cavity in the cushion and the cover such that a predetermined amount of force applied to the cover will activate the horn.

3. The method of claim 1, further including the step of inserting a retaining ring into a cushion such that said step of securing the cushion to the cover is further defined by attaching said retaining ring to the mock inflator.

4. The method of claim 1, further including a base to which the cover is secured, a housing having an upper and lower platform that defines a housing

cavity, and a piston disposed within the housing cavity and slidable between the upper and lower platform, wherein said compacting step is further defined by guiding the cushion into the cavity of the cover through the tube cavity defined by the tube.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the tube is movable between an open position and a closed position and the piston is movable relative to the tube, wherein said step of securing the cushion to the mock inflator is further defined by securing the mock inflator to the piston and further including the steps of raising the piston within the tube to the upper platform, lowering the lower platform of the tube onto the base securing the cover, and driving the piston within the housing cavity to compact the cushion into the cover cavity of the cover.

Sub A2 6. An assembly for assembling a cushion to a cover, said assembly comprising;

a base for supporting the cover;

a housing having an upper platform and a lower platform defining a housing cavity;

an air bag housing slidably disposed within said housing cavity;

a piston movable between said upper platform and said lower platform; and

a mock inflator attached to said piston.

Sub B1 7. An assembly as in claim 5, wherein said tube cavity is shaped to form the outer periphery of said cushion.

8. An assembly as in claim 5, wherein said mock inflator includes an outer periphery shaped to form an inner sleeve cavity within the cushion.

9. An assembly as in claim 5, wherein said cushion further includes a retaining ring to attach said cushion to said mock inflator.

10. An assembly as in claim 5, wherein said piston is pneumatically actuated between an open and closed position.

11. A method for installing a cushion into an interior cavity of a cover, said method comprising the steps of;

forming a cushion subassembly and attaching same to a movable piston, the subassembly including a cushion housing and the cushion;

positioning the cover apart from the piston;

moving the piston toward the cover to press the cushion into the cover, thereby folding same and positioning the housing atop the now folded cushion with the interior of the cover.

12. The method as defined in Claim 11 wherein the step of assembling a subassembly includes securing an inflator to the air bag housing.